No. 1.] JUNE, 1886.

JOURNAL

OF

THE BACON SOCIETY.

PUBLISHED PERIODICALLY.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/baconiana_1886-06_1_1

INTRODUCTION.

THIS Periodical owes its origin to the establishment at the close of last year, under the style and designation of the "Bacon Society," of a Society for Promoting the Study of the Works and Life of Francis Bacon, and, as a portion of such study, to investigate his supposed connections with the composition of the writings attributed to Shakespeare.

A society for promoting the study of the writings of the "wisest of mankind" carries with its object its own justification, and that being so, the establishment by it of an organ or instrument, whereby to discourse harmoniously to its members, needs also no apology. For if there be reasons for the existence of the Society itself, there is reason also for its endowment with the faculty of speech. The object of the Journal is primarily to afford information to its members residing in the country and abroad, and who may be unable in consequence to be present at its meetings, of its proceedings from time to time, and thus to afford to them the means of interesting in it and its work friends, not members, but like-minded. But it is not desired to stop here. It is hoped to render it the repository for communications, suggestions, and enquiries from members, as well as from correspondents, not members, but interested, or inclined to be, in its work.

This Periodical will, therefore, at all times, be ready to receive communications likely to promote its objects either by sympathetic comment or by candid and courteous criticism. It is content to sacrifice the austere dignity of a "Journal of Proceedings," in order to render itself more widely accessible, and it is hoped thereby more generally interesting and useful. Its scope and object, however, being limited, it can scarcely claim to regard itself as a Magazine—unless, perhaps, in that limited sense of that term in which it is employed to define a storehouse for explosives! For it trusts to store away within it material for the explosion of some antiquated and superstitious dogmas of biography and otherwise, on the subject to which it addresses itself.

This Periodical will, therefore, contain (1) abstracts of the proceedings of the Society; (2) papers read at its meetings; (3) correspondence and communications; (4) "Baconiana," or intelligence on matters connected with the study of the works of Bacon, and of those of Shakespeare in connection with Bacon.

For all these it will seek to make provision, but its means of doing so must depend very greatly upon its size and the frequency of its appearance. "Time and space happen to all men" and govern most things. But the "time" at which a serial publication shall appear, and the "space" available in it, are dependent upon a power in this connection more potent than them both, and that is a "healthy circulation," without which no higher organism can long continue to exist. A publication addressed in the first instance to readers who are entitled to expect to receive it for nothing, labours under considerable disadvantages in this direction. To such, it must appeal *in limine* to assure it a more extensive and profitable circle of readers either by obtaining subscribers to it or members to the Society by which, in the first instance, its expenses will have to be borne. An illustrious critic and writer once told a friend that there were two things he thought he could do well. The one was to explain in a preface to a work what it was desired to make it, and secondly to explain why it was impossible that it should adequately fulfil the aims of its projectors. This gift is not possessed by all writers. We have sought to explain what is the aim of this publication, and must be content to remit the question of its successful attainment to the judgment of unimpassioned posterity.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BACON SOCIETY.

No. I.

At a meeting held at No. 81, Cornwall-gardens, on 18th December, 1885 for the purpose of considering suggestions for the formation of a Society for the fuller examination and study of the life and writings of FRANCIS BACON,

The Chair was taken by Mr. Alaric A. Watts.

The Chairman, in introducing the business of the evening, commented upon the growing interest taken by intelligent and cultivated persons in the life and writings of Bacon, an interest which had been much quickened by the suggestions thrown out by Mr. W. H. Smith in 1856, and the subsequent work of Mrs. Henry Pott, directed to establishing the fact that there were good reasons for believing that intimate connection could be traced on the part of Bacon with the plays and sonnets of Shakespeare. After bearing high testimony to the value of the labours of Mrs. Pott in this direction, the speaker suggested that the time had come for affording her assistance, and he hoped that the proposed Society would prove useful to that end. At the same time it was not intended or desired that the members of this Society should be committed, as such, to a belief in these latter theories, or indeed, to the investigation of them. All would be welcome who felt themselves interested in the life and writings of Bacon.

The following resolutions were then proposed, and seconded, and carried unanimously:—

1.—That a Society be formed to be called "The Bacon Society," the objects of which shall be—

(*a*) To study the works of Francis Bacon as Philosopher, Lawyer, Statesman, and Poet; also his character and life; his influence on his own and succeeding times, and the tendencies and results of his writings.

(*b*) To investigate Bacon's supposed authorship of certain works unacknowledged by him, including the Shakesperian dramas and poems.

2.—That the objects of the Society be carried out by meetings, discussions, lectures, communications, publications, and research generally.

3.—

(*a*) That the Society shall consist of Members and Associates of either sex, who shall be elected by the Committee.

(*b*) That Members shall be either Ordinary, Honorary, or Corresponding Members.

(*c*) That Ordinary Members shall be proposed and seconded by Members, and shall pay an entrance fee and subscription.

(*d*) That Honorary and Corresponding Members shall pay no entrance fee or subscription.

(*e*) That Associates shall pay a lesser entrance fee and subscription then those of Ordinary Members.

(*f*) That persons under 21 may be admitted as Associates.

4.—That the affairs of the Society shall be governed by a President, Vice-Presidents, and a Committee of Management.

5.—That the Funds of the Society shall be applied in payment of the current expenses incidental to the object of the Society and in publications.

6.—That the first Rules of the Society shall be framed by the Committee of Management, and approved by the President, and a copy of them shall be sent to every Member or Associate on election.

7.—That W. H. Smith, Esquire, be the President of the Society for 1886.

8.—That the following gentlemen be the Members of the Committee of Management for 1886, with power to add to their number:—

Mr. Alexander Cory	Mr. Arthur Owen
Mr. T. William Erle	Dr. R. Theobald.
Mr. Ernest Jacob	Mr. Alaric A. Watts
Mr. W. D. Scott Moncrieff	

9.—That Mr. Alaric Watts be a Vice-president of the Society.

10.—That Mr. Henry Pott be the first Honorary Treasurer of the Society.

11.—That Mr. Francis Fearon be the first Honorary Secretary of the Society.

12.—That the President be *ex-officio*, a Member of the Committee, and when present, Chairman,

13.—That the Committee be requested to frame rules for the Society, to be subject to approval of the President.

14.—That it be an instruction to the Committee to consider at once the expediency of publishing a journal, giving a record of the proceedings, and the work of the Society and its Members, and acting as an organ of communication between Members.

A paper, contributed by Mr. W. H. Smith, was read by Mrs. Pott.

A letter from Mr. Wigston was read by Mrs. Pott.

The meeting was addressed by Mr. D. Chadwick, Mr. Claude Webster, and Mr. Watts.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Watts concluded the proceedings.

At a meeting of the Society, held at No. 81, Cornwall-gardens, on April 15, 1886, Mr. Alaric A. Watts, Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The Chairman, in opening the proceedings, welcomed the Members and Associates to this their first meeting since the constitution of the Society. He regretted that Mr. W. H. Smith, who had been elected the President for the year, had been unable to take up the office, owing to advancing age and ill health. The Committee had framed rules, which had been submitted to the Members. A number of Members and Associates had been elected. The Committee were alive to the desirability of issuing publications, so far as the finances of the Society would permit. He called on Dr. Theobald to read his paper:—

"BACON, AS VIEWED BY HIS BIOGRAPHERS."

All members of the Bacon Society must take some interest in the questions—various, perplexed, and perhaps, to some extent, insoluble—connected with the life and career of Bacon. If Bacon stands at the summit of human achievement in literature and philosophy, and if we have good reason for thinking him the greatest of all poets, everything relating to him personally becomes at once invested with supreme interest. His character is not a matter of private concern only, it belongs to his country and humanity, and the shock of his fall would be felt wherever his writings are read and admired. It is *primâ facie* incredible that the brightest luminary in the firmament of literature and poetry should be intellectually refulgent and morally dark. And it is right to shrink instinctively from such an inharmonious blending of moral opposites. We cannot worship a smirched divinity, and if Bacon is what we suppose him to be in literature, we cannot refuse him our homage. It is, therefore, a matter of almost sacred duty to rescue his shrine from desecration. Only unreflective, superficial critics say, "What matters it who wrote this and that noble work of literature; our only concern is to have it, whether it comes from above or below." To this we can never assent. As well

might we say that it is all the same to us whether the tenderest and deepest evangel was written by Judas Iscariot or John the Beloved. It is not the same. Our gorge rises at a soiled tablecloth; we refuse to receive our dishes if handed by grimy fingers. And shall we be less fastidious in our intellectual repast, and accept the daintiest feast of reason from hands reeking with the foul odours of moral corruption?

Bacon has fared badly at the hands of his biographers. The hue and cry of detraction has been raised after him, and it has become the fashion to treat him as an irreclaimable reprobate, past praying for. It is not my purpose in this paper to enter upon any discussion of Bacon's character, or even to give, except incidentally, the conclusions which I have myself formed. My object is rather to present a brief account of some of the most conspicuous versions of the story of Bacon's life, and point out their leading characteristics.

Bacon's earliest biographer was Dr. Rawley, his personal friend, who assisted him in literary work during the last five years of his life, and was, as Spedding informs us, a kind of literary secretary. His biography was written in 1657, thirty-one years after Bacon's death, and was prefixed to his edition of the *Resuscitatio*. It is an interesting record of the writer's personal impressions, derived from long intimacy and close companionship; and it is, according to Spedding, next to Bacon's own writings, "the most important and authentic evidence concerning him that we possess."

Other biographies were prefixed to the editions of Bacon's works published in the 17th and 18th centuries. Malet's is especially interesting, and contains valuable descriptions of Bacon as he appeared to those who met him in society. How much authority is to be assigned to this very precious information it is not easy to say.

The completest account of Bacon's life is undoubtedly that written by Mr. Spedding. This is really a supplement to the magnificent edition of Bacon's works in seven volumes, edited by Spedding in conjunction with Mr. Ellis and Mr. Heath. In this splendid edition the editors have prefixed to each of Bacon's works an explanatory introduction, giving an account

of its history and purpose. These various prefaces are really parts of Bacon's biography, almost as much as the seven subsequent volumes which contain the record of his life in detail. For Mr. Spedding's plan being to publish a preface to everything, he found that by editing all the minor writings he could collect—speeches, pamphlets, State papers, dramatic devices and masques, letters and private notes or memoranda—and prefixing to these also their proper historic introductions, he could fuse together these minor writings, and the connecting thread of narrative becomes essentially a history of all that is known about Bacon himself. Nothing can be more masterly than the way in which this is done. Spedding's work is a monument of patient industry and historic learning, and is, in fact, a very important contribution to the history of the times in which Bacon lived. It is, indeed, impossible to understand Bacon's life without constant reference to the historical, political, and social framework in which it is set; and much of the damaging criticism which has been written about Bacon, when the entire story is coherently told, is easily traceable to imperfect knowledge or entire misunderstanding of the history of which Bacon's life forms a part, and a mistaken idea of the share he was led to take in it.

Those who find the seven volumes containing Bacon's life, with the incorporated *opuscula*, too costly or too cumbrous, may content themselves with an abridgement of the same work, prepared for the American public, and published in two 8vo volumes of about 700 pages each, "Francis Bacon, his Life and Times," extracted from the edition of his occasional writings, revised, corrected, and to some extent supplemented by Spedding himself. It is a curtailed edition of the larger work, made by omitting most of the letters and tracts, and giving all Spedding's connecting narrative with such modifications as were required to form a continuous and unbroken history.

Before Spedding's edition appeared, Basil Montague's was the most complete edition of Bacon's writings, and to this also a biography is prefixed. Basil Montague's edition was unfor-

tunately published when the public mind had been pre-occupied by Pope's random lines about Bacon:—

> "If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shined,
> The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind."

This one couplet has done more injury to Bacon's fame than any one single circumstance connected with him, not even excepting his fall, and his condemnation by the House of Lords in 1621. It was a poisoned dart, which, feathered by the smooth rhythm and epigrammatic charm of Pope's style, readily took lodgment in the minds of whole generations, not merely of Pope's readers, but of those who could only quote at second hand the *bon mots*, the winged words, and the proverbial sayings with which he enriched the English language. Pope's distich is the fruitful germ out of which sprung Macaulay's essay, Lord Campbell's life, and the general *consensus* of denunciation still going on in all sorts of prints, reviews, magazines, histories, moral essays, pamphlets, and newspapers, most of which are merely echoes and reverberations of the sentiment launched forth by Pope with such fatal skill. When Montague's life appeared the reaction against Pope's extra-judicial verdict had set in, and what was then required was a complete restatement of all the facts, without undue bias or favouritism. This Montague's life was not; it was sketchy and imperfect, and the advocacy of Bacon, although earnest and sincere, was so feeble and incomplete, that it became an easy prey for any critical terrier who might take a sportive delight in tearing it to pieces.

Macaulay's essay is a review of Basil Montague's life, and this same sportive delight is only too manifest. Macaulay was an epigrammatist, even more determined than Pope. Not once or twice, not in dealing with Bacon only, but repeatedly, he hoisted some smart antithesis as the mainsail of his literary bark, and throwing away ballast and rudder, drifted away right merrily wherever the antithesis might carry him. Never did he light upon a more appetising antithesis than Pope's lines, "Wisest, brightest, *meanest;*" here was an unexampled opportunity for epigrammatic effect. The contrast between the

magnificent qualities which made Bacon the wisest and brightest of the sons of men, and the base qualities which made him the meanest and most sordid, was for Macaulay an irresistible temptation. Here was a brilliant picture, full of startling contrasts, dazzling lights and deepest shadows, a picture of an intellect quite without parallel in the world's history, associated with the most grovelling and contemptible moral character. And with this as a starting point no calumny is too gross, no misrepresentation too glaring to heighten the contrast. If Bacon, as a young man, writes to his venerated uncle, Lord Burleigh, a letter of modest yet dignified self-justification, Macaulay says he abases himself in the dust and "bemoans himself in language suitable to a convicted thief." If Bacon is present, unavoidably, in a subordinate capacity, when a prisoner is tortured, the whole responsibility is attributed to him; he is pictured as taking a fiendish delight in the cruel spectacle: he goes to the Tower to "listen to the yells of Peacham." If Buckingham writes half a dozen brief and perfunctory lines about some case pending before Bacon as Chancellor, Buckingham "dictates his decisions." If Bacon accepts gifts from suitors, his servants are jackals and decoys hunting up garbage and prey for their insatiable and unscrupulous master. And so the reviewer piles up the agony of detraction by absolute invention of charges never dreamed of before; calumnious accusations are tossed off in reckless profusion from this nimble pen, and Bacon's memory is stabbed, racked, hacked, twisted, tortured, scarified, scorched, charred and carbonised—and all in order that a literary rope-dancer may amuse himself and his readers at Bacon's expense. It is, indeed, provoking that such a life as Bacon's should be made the occasion not for calm judicial criticism, with that strong bias in his favour which so great a benefactor and so transcendent a genius has an inalienable right to expect, but an occasion simply for literary pyrotechnics. In Macaulay's celebrated essay, no facts are given in their native genuineness—all must be dressed up in flaring colours—they are evidently selected and valued in exact proportion to the amount of paradox and surprise that can be extracted from them, and then used for

the construction and decoration of this showy and seductive tableau. Much might be said, if it were relevant to our topic, in praise of Macaulay. I care not to dispute the splendour of his literary achievements. I know, too, that he was a generous, warm-hearted man, capable of self-sacrifice for his friends, capable also of suffering in a just cause. But if you are looking for evidence of his better qualities—justice, self-restraint, severe homage to truth and accuracy—you must not go to his essay on Bacon. Taken alone, this essay gives one the impression of a writer utterly wanting in scruple, simplicity, and charity. It is a fault to be forgiven, a crime which we should like to know that he repented of. If it could be hushed up and forgotten, it would be all the better for Macaulay's credit and reputation. Ultimately its use will be as a sort of beacon—a truth-test, or Alethometer—a gauge of accuracy, by which Macaulay's capabilities in the line of literary romance may be measured and estimated,—a sad monument of the excesses possible to a good man.

It was necessary to refer to Macaulay's essay before completing what I have to say respecting Spedding's contributions to Bacon's portraiture. For he was not content with the prefaces to the separate works and the detailed history in seven volumes. Besides some articles in the *Contemporary Review*, in controversy with Dr. Abbott and others, which have not been re-published, he made a careful, minute, and exhaustive analysis of Macaulay's essay, in two 8vo vols. These were not published till after his death, in 1881, and from some hints which he gave me in letters written some few years before, I believe there are other MSS. ready for publication, and which it is hoped may not be long withheld from the public. The large posthumous work to which I allude is called *Evenings with a Reviewer*; and from all that I have seen of the critical estimates of Bacon which have been since published, I am persuaded it has not yet received the attention which it deserves. The argument of this book is put in the form of a dialogue between A and B; A being a candid enquirer in search of the truth about Bacon, and B, Mr. Spedding himself, who undertakes to supply the facts required,

and point out their import. And in doing this, he takes up Macaulay's criticisms line by line, sometimes word by word, with untiring eagerness and vivacity. Nothing escapes him; no inuendo is too subtle for detection, every insinuation or surmise is dragged into light; the rush and hurry of the brilliant essayist's style is not allowed to pass into unchallenged circulation any base coin to be used in the assault on Bacon; everything alleged against him must give account of itself and show cause for its existence and currency. Spedding thus follows Bacon's censor into the smallest particulars, weighs both the direct and correlative import of all he says, confronts every statement with the historic data on which it rests, and argues his case from these strictly historic premises with every variety of analysis and illustration. Spedding's style is always admirably clear; but, as a rule, it is calm and unimpassioned. And yet by contact with Macaulay he seems to catch something of the essayist's brilliancy; to his own irresistible strength and luminous clearness, which is not the trick of a practised writer, but the result of ample knowledge and complete mastery of his own resources,—to all this he adds a liveliness and polish akin to the most perfect table-talk of an accomplished discourser, engaged on his own most cherished topic. Even Macaulay's affluence in minute historic detail is not matched by Spedding's exhaustive knowledge of all the facts relevant to his subject. And Spedding never embellishes or aggrandizes, as Macaulay perpetually did, in order to garnish his literary dishes. If Spedding finds his information incomplete, he tells you so; if he guesses or conjectures, he tells you he is guessing and gives the ground of his conjecture, and is careful to show exactly how much he assumes that he cannot prove, why he thinks the assumption fair and probable, what otherwise dark places it throws light upon, and what is its value as compared with rival speculations. He carries this scrupulous exactness so far that he constantly states with cautious reserve what a less conscientious writer would affirm as ascertained fact. And yet with all this laborious accuracy he never tires his reader, he is never heavy, never tedious. His argument has all the interest of some judicial summing up of a *cause célèbre* by a

learned and skilful judge—something like the late Chief Justice Cockburn's summary of the Tichborne case. Spedding's *Evenings with a Reviewer* is, however, something more than the review of a review, it almost amounts to a new, complete recital of the story of Bacon's life. There are long pauses in the polemics, devoted to independent narrative, during which Macaulay is almost forgotten. The story is, however, told on the lines suggested by the hostile critic, and these large apparent digressions are intended to make the refutation complete. It is not a squabble between two advocates in which the counsel for the defendant is simply seeking for a verdict, and is satisfied if he can make out a good case for the legal acquittal of his client on the points of the indictment. Spedding's defence goes far beyond this. He not only deals with the special items which Macaulay produces, he traverses the whole period to which they relate; he shows what Bacon was really doing at the time when he is represented as acting basely, and what is the true state of the case which has been so injuriously interpreted. He undertakes to show that the charges alleged are at variance with the whole tenor of his life and the entire conception of his policy, so that not only was he not guilty in fact, but it was morally impossible that he should have been thus guilty. Thus the vindication is not a piece of clever special pleading, but depends on the entire harmonious picture of the man and the scheme of his life, rather than on any minute criticism of isolated acts and words. Spedding's vindication is first minute and then comprehensive.

Lord Campbell's Life of Bacon is another echo of Pope's couplet. It has been widely read, both in its original setting, as one of the lives of the Lord Chancellors, and as a separate publication. This biography was published before Spedding's, and Lord Campbell had to seek for his material in State papers, legal archives and in preceding biographies, especially those of Basil Montague and Macaulay. If an author undertakes in a few years to write the lives of many scores of eminent men who have successively sat upon the woolsack, we must not be surprised if his information is sometimes imperfect, and his critical judgment defective. If Spedding did not find thirty

years too much for a complete study of Bacon and his works, it is not wonderful that the few months which Lord Campbell gave to the same study, before Spedding's store had been gathered and garnered, cannot have yielded an altogether satisfactory result. And if we find that Lord Campbell follows closely in Macaulay's track, and that his strictures are more or less exact reproductions of Macaulay's, we may safely conclude that the case for or against Bacon stands exactly where Macaulay left it, and that the new witness, having for the most part only second-hand testimony to offer, may stand aside as practically of no importance. In truth, the inaccuracies of this work are so numerous and glaring that little reliance can be placed on the judgment which follows and rests upon them. For example:—He confounds Oliver St. John with a Chief Justice in the Commonwealth of the same name, and with this initiatory blunder, proceeds to rejudge the case and condemn Bacon. Again, for want of a careful observance of dates, Lord Campbell quotes a letter written on September 27th, 1593, as an answer to a letter dated June 7th, 1595; and quotes a second portion of the June 1595 letter, as if it were a rejoinder to the letter of September 1593. The style is frequently sadly deficient in dignity, especially when Bacon is to be damaged by caricature and contemptuous colouring of his action. Bacon, for instance, is supposed to be "sobbing" when he writes a certain letter; he is represented, like a vain girl, as "exceedingly delighted with some glimpses of court favour," he is infinitely gratified when he is knighted, he makes a "flaming speech" which gets him into trouble, and then he is struck with repentance and remorse, and curries favour by taking opportunity to "sneer at the liberal party." Bacon marries, and his marriage, instead of being "incense to Venus," was simply "a scheme to make his pot boil." And so on, rancour, vulgarity and blundering combine to blacken Bacon's memory and traduce his character. Nothing is allowed to stand in its simplicity and bear a natural meaning, everything must be tortured and coloured till it represents Bacon as either hateful or contemptible. This so-called biography of Lord Campbell's is, from beginning to end, one continuous strain of bitter detraction,

only interrupted by occasional bursts of conventional eulogy which is either incredible in itself or absolutely inconsistent with the censure that precedes and follows. The most genuine praise, however, comes when Lord Campbell is speaking from his own independent knowledge, on matters where he is a competent judge. Mr. Hepworth Dixon remarks that Lord Campbell has warm commendations for Bacon's legal reforms, for his plans as a minister, for his rules as a chancellor.

Hepworth Dixon's contributions to Bacon's biography are well-known. His earliest work is, "The Personal History of Lord Bacon, from Unpublished Papers." It is a book evidently inspired by a burning indignation at the savage treatment awarded to a man whose genius and productions were so pre-eminent, that those even who blame him most, are compelled to antidote their censures by monstrous and paradoxical praise, constructed on the principle of combining into one portrait all sorts of incompatible opposites. Shakespeare was only too well qualified to supply the type for this sort of censure:—

> "O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face:
> Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?
> Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!
> Dove-feathered raven! wolfish-ravening lamb!
> Despised substance of divinest show!
> Just opposite to what thou justly seemest!
> A damned saint! an honourable villain!
> O nature, what hadst thou to do in hell
> When thou didst bower the spirit of a fiend
> In mortal paradise of such sweet flesh?
> Was ever book, containing such vile matter,
> So fairly bound! Oh, that deceit should dwell
> In such a gorgeous palace!'

Hepworth Dixon had the soul of an artist, that abhorred a picture drawn in incongruous and inharmonious colours. He listens, for a time, musingly to these strange, self-contradictory, eulogistic maledictions; but at last the re-action comes, he cannot endure the shame that is heaped so pitilessly on the head of one marked out, above all others, for honour and homage:—

"He was not born to shame!
Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit;
For 'tis a throne where honour may be crowned,
Sole monarch of the universal earth."

In truth, this splendid burst of poetry is more accurately expressive of the spirit and purpose of Hepworth Dixon's writings about Bacon than any prosaic *precis* of their contents could convey. His "Personal History" is a rapid and masterly sketch of the historical events in which Bacon figured, and of the share he had in them; the narrative is too hurried, and the point of view too sweeping for detail. Its marked characteristic is the large, comprehensive view it presents of Bacon's career. There is very little attempt to take up all the multitudinous points on which hostile critics base their condemnation. Many of them are noticed incidentally; but the ruling purpose of this book is, to show Bacon as he actually lived, and the share he took in the history of his time. Neither does Hepworth Dixon concern himself to describe Bacon as a thinker or a philosopher, or as a picturesque and poetical writer. He is engrossed by the contemplation of Bacon as a statesman, a public man, a man of action as well as contemplation: he sees him in his relation to all the men and events of his time. Hepworth Dixon was an enthusiastic student of the personal side of Bacon's history, which he narrated in fuller detail in his subsequent book—"The Story of Lord Bacon's Life"—in which he to some extent fills up the outlines supplied in the earlier work. I know that he did not consider this department of his work had been completed by the volumes which he published. He informed me, in a letter written at the end of the year 1877, that he had been for some months of that year busily engaged in further investigations into Bacon's history. Whether he left any MSS. sufficiently advanced for publication I have not heard.

A small but very meritorious life of Bacon was published many years ago by Mr. Thomas Martin, a barrister. It was written before Macaulay's fierce invective was penned, and before Spedding's labour had borne fruit, and is remarkable for its vigorous judicial criticism of all the circumstances of

Bacon's fall, and the moral import to be attached to his condemnation. Being a lawyer, Mr. Martin looks at all this tragic history as a specimen of 17th century judicature; and concludes that although the practices for which Bacon was condemned ought not to be tolerated in any court of justice; yet that considering the circumstances of the time, the infinitesimal amount of accusation compared with the vast range of business from which it was extracted, and which as chancellor he had gone through; considering also the *ex parte* nature of the evidence, never tested by cross-examination, never scrutinised or criticised by any sort of defence, that there is the very minimum of moral censure in the judgment passed upon him.

A more recent sketch of Bacon's life and character is that by the Rev. Peter Anton, in a volume devoted to some of England's most distinguished essayists. This writer also vindicates Bacon from most of the charges brought against him by Campbell and Macaulay.

Another brief biography worth mentioning is the short but weighty analysis of Bacon's life written by Mr. William Aldis Wright, and prefixed to the Clarendon edition of the *Advancement of Learning*. Mr. Wright's competence as a scholar and critic are unimpeachable, and it is satisfactory to find that not a trace of all the scorching censure which is epitomised in Pope's couplet is adopted by him. On all the chief points of these formidable indictments he pronounces an unqualified aquittal.

It is worth while here to refer to Mr. Gladstone's estimate of Macaulay's judgment, in an article published in the *Quarterly Review* for July, 1876, republished in 1879, in the second volume of his "Gleanings." Referring to the essay on Bacon, he says:—"We have in this essay, with an undiminished splendour, also an undiminished tendency to precipitancy and exaggeration." He then refers to writers on the other side, and quotes Dr. Whewell's recorded expression of "indignation at the popular misrepresentations of Bacon's character, and the levity with which each succeeding writer aggravates them." Mr. Gladstone then sums up the impeachment case in the following masterly style:—"As regards the official

impeachment of Bacon, if taken alone, it may establish no more against him than that, amidst the multitude of engrossing calls upon his mind, he did not extricate himself from the meshes of a practice full of danger and of mischief; but in which the dividing lines of absolute right and wrong had not then been sharply marked. Hapless is he on whose head the world discharges the vials of its angry virtue; and such is commonly the case with the last and detected usufructuary of a golden abuse which has outlived its time. In such cases posterity may safely exercise its royal prerogative of mercy. . . . The graver and sorer question is, whether in a list of instances which Macaulay blazoned on his pages, and most of all in the case of Essex, Bacon did or did not exhibit an almost immeasurable weakness, sordidness, and capacity of baseness in his moral character. The question is one of wide interest to the moralist, and psychologist, and to England, and even to mankind at large. To our imperfect knowledge the victory seems to lie with the advocates for the defence. The judgments of Macaulay we deem harsh, and his examinations superficial."

Mr. Gladstone admits that his own knowledge is imperfect, and doubtless he has not very accurately apprehended the scope and intention of recent inquiries into the facts about Bacon; for he makes a strange blunder when he refers to Mr. Paget, Mr. Hepworth Dixon, and "*in a peculiar sense*," Dr. Abbott, as vindicators of Bacon. To put Dr. Abbott in the same team—pulling in the same direction as Mr. Paget and Mr. Hepworth Dixon—and even to give him a sort of pre-eminence by an additional complimentary footnote for the republication in 1879, in which Mr. Gladstone "commends to especial notice the searching investigations of Dr. Abbott," is one of the most singular misapprehensions I ever remember to have met with. Dr. Abbott, if a vindicator of Bacon, certainly sets to work in a very "peculiar fashion" indeed; for of all recent critics, no one has so diligently hunted up every grain of fact or surmise that can be brought against Bacon's character. Dr. Abbott is undoubtedly a very accomplished Elizabethan scholar, and indications of wide

knowledge, extensive research, minute criticism, and studious care for verbal accuracy, are evident on every page of his works. But it is plain that he has an ingrained antipathy to Bacon, an aversion almost amounting to hatred. His Baconian pictures have such prevalent Rembrandt tints of deep and unvarying shadow, that the reader very soon loses his expectation of ever finding any genuine eulogy; for if a little bit of praise is grudgingly awarded, it is, as a rule, so qualified, modified, or so severely limited, that the favourable estimate is overweighted and buried under the heap of restrictions that encompass it; the praise is conventional, faint, and formal, and does not impress one as very important, while the condemnation is spontaneous and genuine, and impossible to be forgotten. Moreover, small points of censure are strained and exaggerated to bear a huge and damaging import; words that an unsuspicious reader would pass by as certainly harmless, possibly creditable, are placed side by side with other apparently contradictory sentiments, spoken or written under different circumstances, or from a different point of view, and wholesale charges of inconsistency and infidelity to his own policy or convictions, are thus manufactured. For example, Bacon looked upon a righteous war as a healthy, stimulating, strengthening exercise for a nation; and consequently, it was pitiable, Dr. Abbott thinks, for him to lend himself to James' pacific policy, and extol the advantages of peace. And thus innocent and natural sentiments are fixed, impaled, twisted and cross-questioned till they yield fresh material for a criminal indictment; all the sweet and picturesque Baconian pastures are found to be ambuscades for deadly snakes—on every green sward *latet anguis in herbâ*—the "fair enamelling of a terrible danger," as Bacon would himself say—and we cannot move a step without starting something that creeps and stings, and poisons. It seems to me that no man's letters, speeches, private memoranda, and miscellaneous writings can bear this microscopic criticism, this laborious vivisection. By this laborious application of textual criticism, anyone who writes much can be proved inconsistent, self-contradictory, false, untruthful—what you will. Dr. Abbott is skilful in

the art of literary Mosaic, and much of his criticism is of this logic-chopping, patchwork character. He does not, like Spedding, give broad, comprehensive views of Bacon's life, the tendency of his policy, his entire work as a statesman, chancellor, counsellor; he fastens on isolated acts, sentences, and words (words and sentences more than acts), and loses all the advantage of perspective, which surely belongs to any historic survey either of individual or national life. Moreover, he rarely makes due allowance for the prodigious difficulties under which a public man laboured in the compressed atmosphere of personal government, which encompassed and embarrassed all public life in the sixteenth and the earlier half of the seventeenth centuries: personal government, not of the king only, but, in a subordinate sense, of all who possessed any kind of influence or authority. If this is estimated, I think the wonder will be, not that Bacon failed occasionally to be "like himself," but that even his grand personality was not more completely suppressed, mastered, and crushed by its environments.

On the whole I look upon Dr. Abbott's criticism as an anachronism: an application of 19th century standards to a condition of society that cannot possibly be understood unless 19th century conditions are almost forgotten, and the circumstances of that time sedulously kept in view. And if this applies to Dr. Abbott's criticisms of Bacon, it also applies no less fully to Dr. Church. But I cannot give the very reverend Dean the same credit for accuracy. It is quite evident that his small volume was hastily written, without the advantage of a careful study of Spedding's latest vindication, although he alludes with something like a sneer to the futile efforts at vindication of Bacon's "admiring biographer." As a specimen of his inaccuracy I will refer to one statement which he makes. Certain passages in Bacon's early parliamentary career offended the Queen, and Bacon never so far recovered favour as to receive from her the promotion he had a right to expect. Dean Church, who untiringly represents Bacon as cringing and obsequious, says that this independent conduct was "unforgiven in spite of repeated apologies," and doubtless any apology at all for

what nearly every one admits was very noble and public-spirited behaviour, would have been to the last degree disgraceful to Bacon, which is the point at which Dr. Church is aiming. But not one of these many apologies does the Dean produce, simply because not one exists. Two, or at most three, letters, one addressed to Burleigh, one to Lord Keeper Puckering (or, as Spedding thinks, to Essex), and a third to the Queen herself—represent the "repeated" communications to which Dean Church refers, and in all of them the tone is not in the least apologetic, it is simply that of manly justification. Spedding, Dixon, and Wright, all point this out, and any fair reader may see it for himself. Bacon writes as one sorry that he has given offence, desirous of explaining himself if he has been misunderstood, but vindicating the incriminated speeches as simply uttered in obedience to duty and conscience. This has been so often pointed out that Dean Church's repetition of Campbell's and Macaulay's exploded calumny is absolutely inexcusable, and shows that the Dean was not properly equipped for his work. If I were to speak of him as unfairly and unceremoniously as he speaks of Bacon, I should say that he sells himself to Bacon's slanderers and cringes in a servile and obsequious way before Campbell and Macaulay. For this is exactly his manner of criticism—vague, sweeping, and often merely rhetorical. Thus, "He cringed to such a man as Buckingham. He sold himself to the corrupt and ignominious government of James I. He was willing to be employed to hunt to death a friend like Essex"—and so on. The Dean is no longer wielding a pen, but a pitch-and-tar brush. In every one of these sentences some question is begged, some very debateable historic judgment is assumed in a sense hostile to Bacon, or some inner chamber of consciousness is supposed to be open to public inspection. The reviewers, especially those who speak with "bated breath and whispering humbleness" of any book proceeding from an eminent Broad Churchman, extol this very one-sided sketch as if it were the last word on the subject, "the most perfect and the most final summing up of the verdict of posterity." It is much to be hoped that this is not indeed the last word to be spoken on this subject—

probably posterity has a little more to say both about Bacon and his critics. For if Dean Church's last word, published in 1884, is severe and censorious, Professor Fowler's last word but one, published in 1881, is wonderfully gentle and respectful.

Professor Fowler's little book is descriptive of Bacon's writings and philosophy; a short preliminary chapter only deals with his life and character. In touching briefly on the most painful passage of Bacon's history, that relating to Essex, Professor Fowler can see no "sufficient reason for the persistent and bitter attacks upon his honour and character which it has been the fashion to make;" and in reference to the judicial impeachment he accepts unreservedly Bacon's own judgment of his case—that he had yielded to the *vitia temporis*, which, however, were not *vitia hominis*, and that in the sense which he carefully defined and limited, corruption may be alleged against him, but that his crime was more technical than moral, and that there is no proof that the alleged bribes were anything more than gifts, or that they implied any mercenary element, any bargain by which justice was perverted.

Such, also, is in the main the judgment of Professor Gardiner, in his "History"—a work in which he enters minutely into the details of the impeachment, with the result that his moderate censure is quite consistent with general approval and generous eulogy.

Thus have I given a brief account of what I consider the most striking characteristics of some of Bacon's recent biographers and critics. The list might be much extended. I have only spoken of those I know best, and I have taken no pains to conceal my own impressions of their justice and accuracy. If I am charged with bias, I care not to deny it. My bias is decidedly in favour of Bacon. I cannot profess to be coldly judicial and severely impartial in judging him. Study of his writings must evoke something warmer than critical assent or dissent; it begets personal regard, even personal affection. I cannot "peep and botanize" over his grave. It must be so with anyone, the study of whose writings is part of our daily household business and pleasure—who gives

choicest language and fittest expression to our deepest thoughts —through whose eyes we look out upon nature, history, and humanity. We must, if possible, escape from the conclusions that brand him as base, or that lower him in a lesser degree in our esteem; the darts that are hurled against him hurt us, they wound human nature itself.

And surely this personal bias, arising out of what he has done for us, is really so much testimony to his own high deserving. He himself exists in his books and in the magnetic force that issues from them. If we are thrilled, spell-bound, mastered, and possessed by them, "he being dead yet speaketh" in them and to us. And it is my full persuasion that the judgment that is, as Bacon would have said, infused with affection is safer and truer than that elaborated in the dry light of passionless criticism. The forms and processes of a law court do not supply the highest ideal even of human judgment, and the critic who is severely judicial may for that very reason be narrow, *borné* and purblind. In judging *a case*, it may be sufficient to be calmly judicial; but in judging of *a character*, in reading the heart of a man, you must be sympathetic. This does not mean that his faults are to be ignored and his misdeeds smothered up by casuistical excuses. On the contrary, a truly sympathetic judgment is most keen to detect faults, most unsparing in the condemnation of misdeeds, most fully open to the reception of all facts that can enter into the vast and complicated induction on which it is so earnestly busy. A judge will not listen to any facts which might confuse the issue before him; and yet these same irrelevancies which are ruled out of Court may be absolutely essential to a full apprehension of the man himself, as distinguished from the counts of the indictment. The mere critic may shut up his subject within the high walls of his chamber, and the best lights of heaven may never reach him. True historic and biographic judgment takes a larger scope, and is more analagous to family views than legal verdicts. The judgment of a son on his guilty father may be infinitely more comprehensive, more balanced, more equitable, more consonant with eternal justice, and even more severe than the judgment of the most exalted and accomplished judge,

who pronounces on the conduct that comes under his official notice. And I do not expect Bacon will be fairly judged till the true relation in which he stands to us is thoroughly understood, and his claims to our reverence and gratitude as the greatest of all poet-philosophers, allowed their fair influence when we are scrutinising his frailties and faults. We do not wish to represent him as other than he really was—but we are seeking for the picture of a man, not a monster; we require something like proportion, harmony, verisimilitude in the grouping of his attributes; and if we are told in the same breath that he was false, worldly, selfish, treacherous, mean,—and also that he was eager in the quest of truth, kindly, generous, attractive, magnificent and pious, we know we are being hoaxed, and that even undiscriminating eulogy is more self-consistent and more probable than these calm, philosophic and judicial identifications of Christ with Belial.

After the reading of the paper,

Mr. W. Scott Moncrieff, in proposing a vote of thanks to Dr. Theobald for his paper, said that whether all persons agreed in the views expressed in it or not, all would sympathise with the statement of Dr. Theobald, that in seeking the true portrait of Bacon it was the portrait of a great man, a congruous whole, not of a monster, that was to be sought, and that such a search would be the most interesting function of the Society. Macaulay, had he been influenced by a different epigram from that of Pope, would have written a different criticism. Macaulay knew that the moral life of the age was to be considered in drawing a picture of an individual who lived in it; he recognised this in his life of Machiavelli, but he ignored it in his essay on Bacon. Dr. Theobald's paper opened up a large field of work for the Members of the Society.

Mr. Fearon, in seconding the vote of thanks, said that the Society had every reason to thank Dr. Theobald for opening the proceedings with such a fundamentally interesting paper.

The vote of thanks was then put and carried unanimously. The proceedings were continued by "A Debate on Bacon's Character," in a dialogue, written by Mrs. Pott, in which Mr. Moncrieff took the part of a questioner as to Bacon's character, and Mrs. Pott answered him.

Mrs. Pott then read a paper giving the last news concerning the Hon. Ignatius Donnelly's alleged discovery of the Shakesperian cipher.

Mr. Owen, in proposing a vote of thanks to the Chairman, reminded the audience that the unfavourable views heretofore taken of the character of Bacon had been largely due to prejudice, the child of ignorance; that if we would alter this, we must study his works. The speaker referred with commendation to an edition of Bacon's "Wisdom of the Ancients" and "New Atlantis," published in a cheap and popular form by Messrs. Cassell.

The Chairman, in returning thanks, expressed satisfaction at the proceedings of the evening and hoped that future meetings would be as full of matter for thought as the papers which had been read.

MR. DONELLY'S SHAKESPEARE CIPHER.

In the May number of the *Nineteenth Century* appears an article, written by Mr. Percy M. Wallace, on Mr. Donelly's Shakespeare Cipher. Mr. Wallace is careful to explain that he writes not as a "Baconian," nor as representing our Society. The following paragraph, at the close of his paper, defines his position:—

I hold no brief for the "Baconians." The above is not an enunciation of their position. As before stated, their belief is not grounded upon this discovery. Though it is, perhaps, hardly fair to Mr. Donelly's contribution, which will, to the general public, appear of less force, standing, as it does here, by itself, I have been anxious not to introduce any of the evidence upon which the Society's conviction rests. . . . . It is due to the "Baconians" to point out, that those not conversant with the rest of their evidence will not only not have learnt

from the above any fair notion of the nature of their belief, but also will hardly be able to approach this phase of the movement in the same spirit of preparedness as they would, otherwise, bring to its consideration.

It is worth remark that the word "Baconian" has already acquired a technical meaning, and is used as the generic name for those who believe that Bacon wrote "Shakespeare." It is also significant that Mr. Wallace speaks of our action as a "movement;" not that we have any militant tastes of our own, but the mode of our reception necessitates an attitude of self-defence. This by the way. Our main object in quoting this explanation of Mr. Wallace's, at the outset, is in order that the position of the Bacon Society, in reference to the Donelly Cipher, should be clearly understood, beyond the possibility of mistake.

We await Mr. Donelly's disclosures with eager interest, but we are not yet in a position to endorse them. The topic is ours; and if Mr. Donelly makes good his professions we shall share in his triumph, and accept him as our most distinguished ally. But Mr. Donelly's chickens are not yet hatched, and we must decline the responsibility of tabulating the statistics of his poultry-farm before the process of incubation is completed. To this we are persuaded that Mr. Donelly himself will not object; and with this preliminary caution, we will proceed to give some account of his investigations and discoveries, so far as he has at present disclosed them, taking Mr. Wallace's article as our chief guide and authority; freely reproducing his statements, with such abridgements as the limitation of our own space requires.

But first, Who is Mr. Donelly himself? Mr. Donelly resides at his farm of about 1,000 acres, near Hastings, Minnesota, on the banks of the Mississippi. He is well-known and much respected in his own country, having been Lieutenant-Governor of the State for four years, and Governor during part of the civil war. He was subsequently a Member of Congress for six years, and State Senator for five years. He has published two books, which have passed through many editions, entitled: "Atlantis, the Antediluvian World;" and

"Ragnarok, the Age of Fire and Gravel." Mr. Donelly, therefore, has a social position—a personal and literary reputation—which he cannot afford to trifle with. He is not the man from whom to expect a literary jest, still less a literary fraud.

For many years Mr. Donelly has been a "Baconian," and has taken especial interest in the Shakesperian department of the Bacon question, and in his acknowledged writings, as well as in Elizabethan history and literature generally. A chance glance at an article on Ciphers, in one of his son's books—a book of boyish sport—led him, some years ago, to ruminate on the Cipher as explained by Bacon; and putting together a number of facts and considerations, he was led to hunt for a Baconian Cipher. He noted such facts as these:—

1. Cipher writing was not a mere toy in Bacon's time, but a serious study, pursued by statesmen, and constantly used in diplomatic and state service.

2. Bacon was especially interested in Cipher writing; invented some varieties for himself; described them in his serious philosophical works; and gave samples and rules for the use of them.

3. Bacon's conception of a Cipher was that of a writing which might be on any topic, and conceal anything you please; a method of writing, as he says, *omnia per omnia;* the writing infolding being not less than a multiple of five of the writing infolded.

4. Bacon had the most compelling motives to use a Cipher, in order to secrete his claim to the authorship of Shakespeare, and probably other matters relating to his own history and character.

5. The way in which Bacon himself speaks of a Cipher—almost challenging those who "have wits of such sharpness and discernment as to pierce the veil," to track him into his secret retreat—convinced Mr. Donelly that this game of "hide and seek" might be started somewhere, and the most likely ground seemed to be the plays. Accordingly, as Mr. Donelly himself says:—

I proceeded, deliberately, to re-read the plays, to find the evidences of a Cipher, and I found them in abundance. While the word Stratford (Shakspere's residence) does not appear once in the plays, the words St. Albans occur a dozen times. I found, on one column alone, the name Francis repeated twenty times; on another, the name William twelve times. Close to the twenty repetitions of Francis, I found *Bacon, Nicholas, Bacon's son, Master of the Exchequer, Lord Keeper* of the *Great Seal, St. Albans.* On the same column, in the *Merry Wives,* with the word *William,* I found *Bacon,* and near at hand the words, *Shakes* and *pier,* the words evidently being dragged into the text.

Mr. Donelly first tried to find some Cipher plan in ordinary editions of Shakespeare, but failing to discover any method that did not, in some measure, depend on type-setting peculiarities, he was driven to seek for one in the only edition of the plays which had been printed during Bacon's lifetime, and in which he could have manipulated the type to serve his own purposes. This, of course, is the famous 1623 Folio. Mr. Donelly was able to procure, as anyone else can, a photographic facsimile of this edition, and here he very soon began to find he was getting "warm" in his search for hidden treasures.

First of all he noted, that on counting the words on any page, the numerical position of significant words was constantly a multiple of the page on which they were standing. Thus:—

The 371st word, on p. 53, was *Bacon:* and $371 = 7 \times 53$.

The 224th word, on p. 56, is *Francis:* and $224 = 4 \times 55$.

The 648th word, on p. 54, is *Nicholas:* and $648 = 12 \times 64$.

And this little circumstance was so often repeated, that he was sure it was not accidental. A writer in the *Sunday Sentinel* (of Indianopolis) of May 16, relates how Mr. Donelly handed him some MS. sheets to examine. These were ruled to order, and the columns of words, which resulted from self-similar calculations, carried on through several successive pages, made a continuous narrative. For example, the following is an illustration only of the kind of calculation, and the consequent result—not any actual case, but accurately resembling those which Mr. Donelly had worked out:—

888 — 250 = 630 ... His
888 + 110 = 998 ... speech
888 — 250 = 630 ... was
888 + 110 = 998 ... rude
888 — 250 = 630 ... and
888 + 110 = 998 ... coarse,
888 — 250 = 630 ... and
888 + 110 = 998 ... showed
888 — 250 = 630 ... none
888 + 110 = 998 ... of
888 — 250 = 630 ... that
888 + 110 = 998 ... imperial
888 — 250 = 630 ... mastery
888 + 110 = 998 ... of
888 — 250 = 630 ... language
888 + 110 = 998 ... found
888 — 250 = 630 ... in
888 + 110 = 998 ... the
888 — 250 = 630 ... plays

What the exact law or laws are, Mr. Donelly does not yet explain—that is reserved for his book. The material which he had to work upon was the great crowd of typographical anomalies contained in the folio. These had been usually set down to carelessness—"the lack of proper editorial supervision"—and for ordinary Shakesperians, who could not look further than Hemmings and Condell, or Ben Jonson, this explanation was enough. But as Mr. Donelly could always see Bacon lying *perdu* behind these whimsical masks, he was not satisfied with these explanations. As a rule, the irregularities did not seriously interfere with the text. Many editors indeed, disregarding mere printer's vagaries or eccentricities, as they regard them, have spoken of various plays as being printed with remarkable accuracy. The edition was one *de luxe*, expensively produced; and the multitudinous anomalies are, as a rule, such as the printer would not make, but would carefully and easily avoid. They refer chiefly to four points: "irregular paging, arbitrary italicising, meaningless bracketing, and senseless hyphenation." We may give the following specimens of each:—

1. *Irregular paging.* The comedies come first, and are

paged consecutively up to page 303. Then follow the histories, beginning again at page 1. Page 100 sees the end of the text of *2 Henry IV.* Two pages then follow unnumbered. Then comes *Henry V.*, beginning suddenly on page 69. *Henry VIII.* ends on page 232, and is succeeded by *Troilus and Cressida*, the third page of which is 79, and the fourth, 80. Here the pagination abruptly ceases, and the remaining twenty-five pages of the play are unnumbered. Then comes page 1 again for *Coriolanus.* In *Hamlet*, page 156 is followed by page 257, and from this number the pagination proceeds consecutively to the end of the volume, except that the last page, which ought, in this sequence, to be 399, is 993.

2. *Arbitrary italicising.* This is abundant. The most striking case is in *1 Henry IV.*, page 56. Here the name *Francis* occurs five times in italics, and sixteen times in Roman letters.

3. *Meaningless brackets.* These have been a stumbling-block to commentators, and are left out in modern editions. On pages 74 and 75, in *2 Henry IV*, there are eighty bracketed words. On pages 72 and 73 there are only three, on pages 70 and 71 there is but one. Mr. Donelly finds that the exigencies of the Cipher demands account for all these irregularities.

4. *Senseless hyphenation.* Throughout the volume the use of hyphens is most irregular. For instance, in *1 Henry IV.*, Act ii., Scene i., p. 53, we read:—

> "I am ioyned with no Foot-land-Rakers, no Long-staffe six-penny strikers, none of these mad Mustachio-purple-hu'd- Malt wormes, but with Nobility, and Tranquilitie."

And in *2 Henry IV.*, at the end of the Induction, page 74, we read:—

> "From *Rumour's* Tongues
> They bring Smooth-Comforts-false, worse than True-wrongs."

There are none of these antics in the corresponding passages in the quarto editions of the same plays. The frequency in the use of hyphens varies in different and closely contiguous

pages, in a way not to be accounted for by the ordinary chances of blundering.

The use of capital letters also struck Mr. Donelly as strange. In the four places where the word Bacon occurs it is spelt with a capital. This also proved to be one of the wheels in the cipher mechanism.

A prolonged study of all these arbitrary peculiarities showed that they did not as a rule make the text corrupt, but only eccentric; and that they were not chance variations caused by careless or unsystematic type-setting, but deliberate typographical attitudinising, the result of set purpose, and challenging interpretation. The contradictory reports of the critics about the state of the text in the 1623 folio seemed also to be accounted for; for what a severe but unsuspecting critic would take to be marks of inexcusable carelessness, to be condemned as blunders, another would regard as unimportant printer's vagaries, to be silently corrected, leaving the text on the whole sound. Even those alterations of the text which disturb the meaning do not often disguise it beyond the reach of critical restoration. In a more advanced stage of his work he found that many of the *cruces Shakesperianæ* which have puzzled all the commentators are required by cipher exigencies, and do not occur in the quarto editions of the plays which had been published previously. Thus in the *Merry Wives* the word "Bacon" appears in a most irrelevant scene and as a most irrelevant pun, based on a story which is told—perhaps by Bacon himself—of his father. And in the scene where the jealous Ford strikes himself on his forehead and cries, "Peere-out! peere-out!" and Herne the Hunter is described as one who

> "Shakes a chain
> In a most hideous and dreadful manner,"

these words, *peere* and *shakes*, occur in places where the cypher is talking about Shakspere. Again, Thersites' "masticke jaws" is part of the word, satire-o-masticke. "Hurley-burley innovation," and "when the hurley-burley's done," is a forced expression to bring in Lord Burleigh's name. Falstaff's death, described by Mistress Quickly: "His nose was as sharp as a

pen, and a table of green fields," is a violent modification of the text, necessitated by the cipher use of the word *table.*

As Mr. Donelly worked on, the cypher plan gradually disclosed itself, and he came across, as he says, " A complete and elaborate narrative, perfect in all its parts, minute in detail, containing not only a statement of facts, but a description of his own feelings in the midst of the great troubles and dangers that surrounded him."

In order to epitomise as fully as possible the details of the cipher narrative, so far as they have been communicated, we take Mr. Wallace's account of Mr. Donelly's report.

The cipher story, he tells us, after treating of Essex's plots against the Cecils, proceeds to a minute and detailed account of Robert Cecil's jealousy of his cousin, Francis Bacon, and his detection of the drift and authorship of the plays, of his confiding his suspicions to the Queen, and of the complications that ensued. On this point Mr. Donelly has written at great length to his friend in this country, quoting in full the graphic description in the cipher of the exciting events that took place, in which Shakspere, Burleigh, Bacon himself, and his faithful servant, Harry Percy, are the chief actors. The last named person occupies a very prominent position throughout the cipher story. He seems to have been admitted to the greatest intimacy with his master, and to have thoroughly deserved the confidence reposed in him. Shakspere's character, antecedents, and career are dwelt upon at some length. With the utmost detail is recorded how the Queen ordered him to be arrested, and, if necessary, racked, to divulge the name of the real author, and how Bacon managed to save the disclosure. It is, writes Mr. Donelly, a wonderful story—how Bacon sent his faithful friend-servant to find Shakspere, and to get him to fly the country when the Queen gave orders for his arrest. Percy's disguise of himself; how he stooped down and embraced Bacon for the last time, as he was about to start on his mare (note the minute details) from the orchard of St. Albans; how he comforted him and told him that he would save him—Bacon in the meanwhile standing in the darkness and listening to the dull beats of the hoofs of his horse on the hard ground as he receded. His fondness for Percy's faithful and cheerful spirit; his feeling that only the errand of that one true man stood between him and the greatest disgrace and shame, &c. The internal story will be found to be as thrilling and as absorbing and as powerfully rendered as the plays themselves. The interview between Percy and Shakspere takes place at Stratford in the presence of Shakspere's wife and daughter. It is told with the utmost detail. The whole Shakspere family is described—his younger

brother Edmund, his daughter Susanna, his wife, his sister. The very supper bill of fare is given, and a very mean one it was—"*dried cakes, mouldie and ancient,*" roast mutton, far advanced in decomposition, the odour of which perfumed the room; bitter beer, and worse Bordeaux stuff. The smell of the meal took away the dandy Percy's appetite. He told Shakspere that the Queen's officers were after him, to arrest him as the nominal author of Richard II., which represented the murder and deposition of the King, and which was held to be an incentive to treason. Shakspere, Percy said, must fly to Holland or Scotland, and there abide till the storm blew over. Thereupon Shakspere became violently abusive of Bacon—"Master Francis," as he calls him—for getting him into such a scrape. "He is," says Percy, "*the foul-mouthedest rascal in England.*" Shakspere declares that he will confess the truth and clear his own skirts. Thereupon came the first anti-Baconian argument. It is the parent of all later ones. Percy told Shakspere (not probably as a fact, but as a threat, and to drive him from the country, so as to save Bacon's exposure) that "Master Francis" would deny the authorship, and that the world would surely believe him and not Shakspere. "For who," says Percy, "could conceive of one man putting the immortal glory of the plays on the shoulders of another? Did not Shakspere bear his blushing honours through all the disreputable houses of London? Did he not profit by the plays? Was he not transformed in new silk and feathers, and looked upon in the low society in which he shone as the one who wrote the plays? The Queen would ask, '*Why kep'st thou silence so long?*'" and much more to the same purpose. Harry Percy anticipated nearly all the anti-Baconian arguments by nearly two hundred and ninety years.

In another instalment of his narrative Mr. Donelly relates how Cecil told the Queen that Shakspere was incapable of writing such plays, and to prove it, gives the account of his wild life as a youth, his fight with Sir Thomas Lucy's men, his killing the deer, his beating one of the gamekeepers, his flight to London, his excessive poverty, begging for bread at the door of the play-houses, and holding horses for a penny; ragged, half-starved, and shivering in the cold, until Henslow, the theatre manager, took pity on him, and had him bound out to him and booked as one of his servants.

It appears that Shakspere, though "the foul mouthedest rascal in England" when provoked, is not on the whole represented in a bad light. "He was very affectionate towards his wife and children and his sisters when he first came to London,

because of the poverty in which he had left them, and his inability to keep them, being himself so very wretched. All this is painted in a masterly manner. He was a good, commonplace man, industrious and reliable, ambitious to be something, very economical, with some weaknesses and considerable vanity."

Mr. Donelly has much to say of the wonder and admiration that fills his mind in the contemplation of this miracle of ingenuity, versatility, wittiness, and patience. He promises that his work, when it appears, will place Bacon "upon an unapproachable height in human estimation, as not only the first of men, intellectually, but with a vast gap between him and the second."

This, then, is what Mr. Donelly professes to find in the 1623 folio. The announcement itself, whether it is justified by the result or not, is one of the greatest "curiosities of literature" that the world has ever seen. It is either a craze or a revelation, and the antecedent improbabilities of the former alternative are so enormous.

Mr. Donelly is hard at work, doing his best to complete the work which we are so eagerly expecting. He hopes to be ready for the press some time in this month of June; but he bids us still be patient—telling us that, as people have waited two hundred and fifty years for this revelation, they may possess their souls in patience for a month or two longer. Quite true, we reply; but we have not been standing with open mouth and shut eyes, expecting a promised *bonne bouche*, for two hundred and fifty years; and if he asks us for patience, we are entitled to ask him for pity. We are apparently on the eve of a great literary discovery, and although the Baconian authorship of Shakespeare does not depend on any one proof, however forcible, yet nothing so conclusive has yet appeared, and we know very well that as soon as the cipher disclosure is complete all other Baconian researches will take a new place in public estimation.